



## Press Release

**For Immediate Release**  
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**Contact: Brad Sherwood**  
**707.521.6204**

# **Mandatory 15 Percent Water Conservation Ordered**

## ***Agency Seeks Immediate Mandatory Conservation from Cities, Water Districts, Businesses, Agricultural Community***

(Santa Rosa, CA) —The Sonoma County Water Agency (Agency) announced today that the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) has released a revised Order relating to its Urgency Change Petition for reduced Russian River flows that requires a mandatory fifteen percent reduction in water diversions from the Russian River beginning July 1 to October 28, 2007. The Agency will immediately begin working with its water contractors, cities and water districts in Sonoma and Marin counties, along with the business and agricultural community in developing metrics and a work plan to implement the mandatory conservation requirement.

The revised Order includes the following stipulations:

1. A 15 percent reduction in diversions from the Russian River by the Agency.
2. Development of a water conservation work plan to be approved by the State Board.
3. Agency is to work with all Russian River water users to reduce use by 15 percent, and investigate and reduce water waste and unreasonable use of water.
4. Prepare a detailed work plan to mitigate flow fluctuation caused by height changes at the rubber dam located on the Russian River.

The revised Order does not change the original flow reduction regime as approved by the State Water Board on May 10. Flow reductions in the Russian River have been phased in since the original Order was released. Since early April the Agency has urged residents, businesses and farmers to take voluntary actions to reduce Russian River water use by 10 to 15 percent over the summer months.

“We will be working with our contractors, along with the business and agricultural community, to immediately implement mandatory water conservation measures,” said Pam Jeane, deputy chief engineer of operations. “We must reduce our diversions from the Russian River by fifteen percent in order to ensure water supply for fisheries in the fall and to continue providing high quality water for more than 600,000 residents in Sonoma and Marin counties, as well as for the many recreational opportunities on the river.”

The Agency submitted an urgent request to reduce flow rates to the State Board on April 26th based on projections indicating critically low water levels in Lake Mendocino this fall at the time of the annual chinook salmon migration. Agency engineers projected that water levels in Lake Mendocino would drop to levels lower than 10,000 acre-feet which would be the lowest levels recorded since the lake was first constructed in 1959. The reduced flow rates allow the Agency to retain additional water storage in Lake Mendocino and improve the likelihood that adequate water supply will be available in the fall to provide for up to 4,500 chinook salmon expected to return to the river to spawn.

The Agency is the local sponsor for the federal water projects at Lake Mendocino and Lake Sonoma and has authority to regulate water supply-related releases from these reservoirs to meet the needs of more than 600,000 people in Sonoma and Marin counties. A decision by the State Board in 1986 requires the Agency to release sufficient water from the reservoirs to maintain flows rates above designated minimum values at certain points along the Russian River. This week's action by the State Board requires mandatory fifteen percent water conservation and allows for the continued implementation of river flow rates below those normally required under current dry weather conditions.

A list of water conservation tips, programs and rebates are available at [www.sonomacountywater.org](http://www.sonomacountywater.org). The top ten water conservation tips the Agency is urging residents to administer include:

- **Reduce irrigation by 20%.**
- **Find and repair leaks now.**
- **Inspect and tune-up irrigation system monthly.**
- **Irrigate between midnight and 6:00 a.m. to reduce water loss from evaporation and wind.**
- **Use a broom, not a hose, to clean driveway, deck or patio.**
- **Use a bucket and a hose with an automatic shut-off nozzle when you wash the car, or take your car to a carwash that recycles.**
- **Cover pools and hot-tubs to reduce evaporation.**
- **Use front-load washing machines.**
- **Run the dishwasher and clothes washer with full loads only.**
- **Prevent and report water waste.**

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*Sonoma County Water Agency provides water supply, flood protection and sanitation services for portions of Sonoma and Marin counties. Visit us on the Web at [www.sonomacountywater.org](http://www.sonomacountywater.org).*